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SUBJECT: JERUSALEM MEDIA REACTION (01/15): General Jones reaffirms the U.S. commitment to the two state solution

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Main Stories:  
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The dailies report on the meeting between Palestinian Authority (PA) President Mahmoud Abbas and US National Security Advisor Jim Jones yesterday in Ramallah. Leading headlines report that Jones reiterated President Obama's commitment and determination to establish an independent Palestinian State.

PLO Chief Negotiator Saeb Erekat said that Jones reaffirmed that the resumption of Palestinian-Israeli negotiations is the best way to allow the US to help the Palestinians. PA Presidency spokesperson Nabil Abu Rudeina noted that Jones stressed that the US will continue its efforts to achieve peace in the region and will remain committed to the two state solution.

Independent daily Al-Quds leads with President Abbas' statements during his interview with "Sawt Al-Arab-Arabs Voice" station in Egypt. Abbas said that the PA will resist US pressure to resume negotiations before a complete freeze in settlement activity and noted that the US pressure on the Palestinians to resume negotiations without a full freeze is "unfair".

The dailies report that Egyptian Foreign Ministry spokesperson Husam Zaki told the press that the relationship between Hamas and Egypt has not reached a "dead end yet" despite the latest tension between them over the steel wall. Khaled Mishal, head of the Hamas political bureau, said he will visit Egypt immediately if invited.

The Fatah Revolutionary Council will start a three day meeting today to follow up on the Fatah Sixth Party Congress held in Bethlehem last August. President Abbas and Fatah Central Committee members will participate in the meetings. The Council will also discuss the

stalemate in the peace process and continued Israeli settlement activities.

The dailies report that settlers from the Ma'oun settlement near Hebron uprooted 70 olive trees belonging to Palestinians yesterday.

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BLOCK QUOTE:  
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Mouhammad Yaghi, writing in Al-Ayyam under the title "Why is the Prisoner Exchange Deal Obstructed?" believes that the international community is imposing pressure on Israel not to proceed with the deal until the resumption of the Palestinian-Israeli negotiations, arguing that they believe that the success of the deal will weaken the PA.

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Palestinian Cyberspace:  
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This week, Palestinian cyberspace focused on the Israeli authorities' and settlers' "assaults" on Palestinians and the tension on the border between Egypt and Gaza.

Many social media sites carried the Palestinian Centre for Human Rights' (PCHR) weekly report on Israeli human rights violations in the Palestinian Territories.

Several blogs focused on the steel wall that Egypt is building on their border with Gaza. Khalid Amayreh, a journalist based in the Palestinian town of Dura, blogged on what he called the "Israeli-Egyptian blockade of the Gaza Strip."

JERUSALEM 00000084 002 OF 002

On PalestineNote.com, George Hishmeh, a founding member of the Jerusalem Fund and former writer for the US Information Agency, blogged under the title "Obama talked the talk but hasn't walked the walk" saying, "What is needed here is more action by the Obama administration and fewer words."

RUBINSTEIN